

Meeting of Wednesday, December 20th, 1961.  
6:30 Group - M-258.

So this will be the last time this year. Next week we will not have the regular meeting. So - what will we do at the end of the year? You can say in the first place we take stock. You can only take stock if you know how to value, and what is the meaning of this year and your experience during this year. For some of you it is a new year in the sense that you, - maybe you never heard of the ideas of Gurdjieff, and it is the first time you have heard something about it. And now you try to put that together in such a way that it also can be helpful to form the foundation for the new year. It is as if at the end of the year you look at the whole year as one whole, one unit, something which you might say telescopes a year into one day, or maybe a point, or an event, or something of that kind so that you have a general viewpoint of that what happened to you in a year. And with that kind of information you start to form plans for the new year. So you've got to be very careful about how you value now, and not to lose yourself in all kind of dreams about - in thinking that your year was better than it is. Let's keep our feet on the ground to see what the year actually has meant in terms of understanding, of work towards objectivity. What do we now understand by that? What do we know? What do we know by experience? What do we know of knowledge put to work that we apply, that we have used in our lives, in our daily experience? What is there in this year that you can consider part of your religion, part of your mode of life, your philosophy, your attitude towards people, your attitude towards yourself, your attitude of what you really believe you are as a human being, or what you expect or you would like to be, your attitude towards your own self, your attitude towards your conscience, whatever there is of conscience; your attitude towards yourself in the sense of hypocrisy, in the sense how honest you are and can be and can remain, whenever you are and in whatever conditions you are, with other people, that you still can remain honest with yourself?

That forms a basis on what you wish to do, what you expect. What can you expect; what can you hope for? In how far do you really know yourself that you can say, "yes, next year I will try to do certain things that I haven't done this year, that I failed to do, and that I perhaps should have done." "I wished I had been able to do, and I didn't do it"? I don't know. Valuations about myself, because it's no use fooling oneself when you try to live. Only on the basis of knowing what you really are that you can expect to be able to say, "I will do this, and I will do that." And if you don't know what you are, you will not be able to say, "I will expect to do such-and-such a thing", or make all kinds of promises. Or you might say a resolution for the new year doesn't amount to anything unless you know the instrument with which you work, and for yourself have a knowledge of that which (you) can rely on.

What is there during this year that you remember of yourself that you could rely on? For instance, that you made a promise and you kept it? That you have said certain things to certain people which fulfilled that promise? That you made a promise to yourself, small things or big things?

But whatever it is, that what you might call now for yourself your own reality, and that from now on until the end of the year, whenever you think about that, you try to remember what was real in your life during this last year. Not that you have to be proud of it, and not that you have to take credit for it. It is simply a matter of finding out what are facts in your life, and what and to what extent there were hallucinations, or hopes, or beliefs, but not actuality. That is the basis. If I know where I am, if I know what I can do, if I know what I have been able to do without particular interpretation or conditioning or rationalization, then I will be able to say, "This is myself, as an ordinary human being, hoping to find his or her place in this world, in what I wish to do regarding my life. And then with the help of that what I call the Higher Being or God or Infinite or Absolute, that I then will this coming year hope to live in accordance with certain rules of what I would call objective morality.

It is a big thing; it is worthwhile to think about it. And we have still some time, I hope, a few days, before New Year comes around. And we can be quite serious during this period. You take account, you take stock, you know what you are. Then to know what you wish, and to try to do what you have not done, and to make that kind of resolution that next year in certain respects may be different because you have realized that this year was not in all respects the way it should have been. It doesn't matter who is responsible; maybe you are, maybe circumstances. Don't judge it. You don't know enough about it. You have to accept conditions as you are even at the present time, and with that you then will start to work. Only make a resolution for yourself that you try to be honest, and not misinterpret, or not equalize, or not simply hope for the best; but put your feet on the ground to see that what you are as a reliable, honest, sincere, simple person. Then we work - a resolution to try to work, a resolution to try to understand what I am, what I wish to be, how I should become, and what is really within my means, so help me, God. This is the resolution for the new year. I take the whole year as one. I am now what I am. Next year of course I hope. Next year I will set out with an idea that I can do what I have not done now. I don't accuse myself. There are many reasons probably that I could not have done what I did or didn't do. I was not responsible for that even what I did, or thought that I could become responsible for. Because if I am really honest, there are very few things that I know that I can do. There are many times that I do things simply because someone else expects me to do it, or because I have a fear that someone else will start to criticize me if I don't do things.

What is there really that I know that I can do and that I then on that basis will want to do next year? The question of relationships, the question of friends, the question of how to be regarding other people, how to be considerate, how to use myself, how I am; and to try every day, this is a resolution- to try every day to be honest with myself, to see what I have done at the end of the day, and to make a resolution for the next day.

When I wake up, do I take it as an opportunity for me then to try to live in accordance with whatever there is of my conscience, and honestly to try that? What do I need? An understanding: in the first place, what I am; my limitations, my ordinary sense of a human being with aspiration toward the possible development of what is now latent or potential in one, and what could grow out in accordance with a certain amount of knowledge, and which would give to myself and my life a perspective so that I start to realize that I am in a certain state, and that in that state I can fulfill certain functions; and in that

sense then have for myself the satisfaction of spending the time of my years the way I perhaps should spend them, in the service of something for the sake of my own possible development in order to discharge certain obligations I have in my life as I find myself in life in my relations towards other people. This I must know for myself that that kind of understanding only can come if I realize certain things that ought to be so, and then slowly, gradually, one by one, and little by little, start to take them as a task. It is a task. It is something I want to do next year.

What will I do now? How will I start? I have an idea about work. We know a little bit about what is meant, what is meant trying to become aware, try to become conscious, try to see oneself impartially, try not to be identified, try to be simply as one is, and accepting that what one is without any particular fan-fare or interpretation or hope for something else. I am now what I am. For that I have to see first my body. It undergoes many changes dependent on the thoughts I have and the feelings I have. If I could become impartial towards myself and accept the fact that I exist in a certain way without wishing to change, I would approach for myself the possibility of being objective.

Why is it necessary to become objective? Because, apparently if I try in any subjective manner, I don't really come to any particular point, but I keep on running around in circles without any definite aim that I can call my own. This you might say is a little strong. Why should I become or try to become objective when everything around me is subjective, and why shouldn't it be possible for mankind as a whole, or any human being who has aspiration simply to develop by thinking in the right way? Thoughts cannot help me in the last instance. It can give me a certain amount of satisfaction for myself that I believe that I am thinking right, and that I don't do any harm. But when it comes to the actuality of living, when I am affected by certain emotional states, when I see that at the moment of stress when I am under the influence of certain feelings that I cannot handle, I will do and I will say certain things for which I am not responsible and which are out of my mouth before I realize it. In other words I don't have control. I am affected by outside conditions and I react towards such conditions. And one thing that I would try for the next year is to become less and less dependent on conditions as they must affect me, and that I will not be any longer a slave to such conditions, but that there is something in me that starts to grow in the direction of trying to become more of a man, or trying to become more what I should be, and what I in my heart, that is, in the depths of my heart, really know of myself that it ought to be possible.

Now for that we work. For that we start with very small things. Because we have to crawl before we can walk. We really don't know very much about how to become objective to oneself, because I am constantly wrapped up with everything that has to do with my personality. And without losing my personality, without giving up my particular duties that I have regarding my ordinary work - I cannot just avoid them - I have to face them; but at the same time something in me could take place that gradually starts to grow and that can give me then in ordinary life a certain foundation on which I can then draw and from which I can operate. So it means that there are really - and it ought to be - the possibility of acquiring within my life something that becomes more permanent and something that is free, and something that, for that, I call for myself something that has more value of a certain

absoluteness which I now in this life don't have unless I pray. If I pray, if I try to establish a contact with something that is outside of this world, and I pray to that, then the only advantage that I would have is that that something towards which I pray could become part of me in my life now, so that then it could be through me manifest in a certain way without violating that what I have to do, and without running away from the obligations I have as an ordinary human being; at the same time doing that in such a way that even if I do the same thing, that the accent of that what I do is not any longer in the periphery of my life but inside in my life. And it is for that degree of permanency, for that degree of that what I really know and on which I wish to base the principle of my life that I try to find something that is not on the periphery, and I call that objectivity. It is really a definition by negativeness, and that what is objective is everything that is not subjective.

And now I try the impossible thing of becoming objective in the subjective world of myself. Therefore I first have to learn what I am, that that with which I work I can rely on. And this is the determination for next year, that, for instance, in certain relationships I should select someone with whom I will want to be honest as often as I can, and not to say words or sentences or even have thoughts which I don't mean. I should select one or two people with whom I want to establish a relationship of that kind of honesty. Within my thoughts I will not wish anything else but the right thing, and I will not say anything that could hurt that person even if it means for me to admit that what that person has done was wrong.

Now this is the task. I want to select, for instance, with my brother. In a general way I like him, but there are many things that I don't like. And now I take as a task that regarding him I will, whenever I see him, whenever I write him, whenever I think of him, that my attitude should be in such a way that I with my thoughts or my feelings am not in the way of his own development in any possibility. You can apply this to a variety of different things. You can apply it to different kinds of relationships. But it is the kind of resolution that you could make in order to give you a certain anchorage with which you can start operating for yourself in trying to do something unusual, something that you have never done before. But now you wish to do it, not so much for the sake of your brother, but for your own sake to be able to do things that you have not done before and which never occurred to you as being important.

There are many resolutions. Always I come back to that what I am. What can I expect of myself and what can I do with whatever I am in that? How can I prepare for whatever I wish to do as an aim? What is my aim? An ultimate aim. Real wish. An aim to be free, not to be a slave. An aim to understand my life, my relationship towards others, my relationship towards what I call my God, towards my conscience, towards my life. To have as an aim aspiration towards things higher, an understanding of them, and in that way to dedicate at least part of my life for that purpose as if I feel and I know that in that direction there is more fulfillment in my life as it should be (the next time).

So we have time until the beginning of the year. You try to write down for yourself what you really wish to do, what you think this coming year could bring you and what you could make out of yourself. And to have that towards this something of your inner resolution of that what is really you, what really is us, ourselves, with that wish to become what is becoming - that what we should be and what we are not. And to hope. But to work, for that. Because nothing will happen. We have to work for that. It is not something that comes naturally. We must work. But we

must work intelligently in very small matters. And to start whatever we see, and certain things that we believe could be changed. Then to change them. But always having in mind that I am not looking for the change. I am looking for - to be awake while I change. When I am awake I am not interested any longer in the change. But the change will come when I am awake. And the accent is on that. The accent is not on wishing for a change of conditions. The accent is a wishing for being aware for myself. That is the Kingdom of Heaven. Then other things will be added. And it is that way that you try to see oneself, ourselves, each person for himself or herself each morning. Try to make a resolution for one month. You will try each morning to see yourself as you will be during that day; and then again to make a resolution that that day you will try to manifest, that is, to bring to the foreground that what you really are in such conditions where it is not foolish to show what you are; but that your attitude is right, and that you wish then to be and behave as a man should behave, as he should honestly try his best to be a child of God.

It doesn't mean very much, you know. Words. But you have to make a resolution for yourself. And when you are not honest with that, nothing will happen. But when you are quiet and you can be alone, when you can really consider a variety of different influences to which you are subject, and then come to the conclusion that you ought to do something about it and that fortunately you are not dead yet so that you have the opportunity to try to work, then try to work in accordance with whatever your understanding is. It doesn't matter how much you understand. It does matter that your attitude is right toward wishing to do something about the condition in which you find yourself, because that condition, as you know yourself well enough, is very much asleep. And there's no question about quibbling about what is asleep, what is awareness and what is awake, what is conscience, what isn't, what is objectivity, what is subjectivity; all of that doesn't matter. I have something within oneself - each person has - something which is holy and sacred that I can call whatever I like, Voice of God, if I wish. I can aspire towards that, and I dedicate part of my life towards that as if that could become something that starts to germinate within me and then changes by different actions towards other people my feelings and my thoughts so that on the basis of that I will actually be able to develop and evolve into something which, let's say, is more permanent, which at least is not as much subject to the ordinary laws of earth, and that perhaps could become free from such conditions which are now binding me and holding me down to earth. It is like a prayer, and it is as if for the next, - how long -, ten days maybe, we will pray, for ourselves, when you are alone, when you can, when you can come to yourself, when you really want to, when the conditions are safe and right for that, when you really can come to yourself, when you want to be what you really think you are in reality. And then be very simple so that His Endlessness grants all of us the possibility of wishing to become aware; to have more consciousness, to have more conscience, and that we will not be afraid in trying; that we are willing to give up certain pet thoughts and ideas, pet feelings, pet forms of behavior which you know yourself are not worth very much, and which you should be able to do without by this time. And then you sit, you pray, you sit, you dedicate. It's only yourself. No one else has to know about it. You don't do it in the presence of others. It is only for yourself. And no one will ever ask you, "did you do it?" Because you are not responsible to anyone for this. You're not even responsible to God. You're responsible to yourself, to your inner life for this. And it

is necessary to bring to the surface a part of this inner life, and not be ashamed that you have it, that it could be of some help for yourself, and in that, in answering that, it will answer to the aim of your life.

Begin. Ten days before the end of the year. Then the year can be different. The year cannot be different if the previous year is not different. Tomorrow is not different if today is not different. But if today is different, tomorrow can be different. And of course there must be that kind of hope. I wish to be as a man, whatever I understand by it, whatever I hope for, - sometimes foolishly as a child, sometimes a little more grown-up. Sometimes selfishly. Whatever it is, I have to be serious about that, to try, and not to forget, and to be patient. So that is like resolution. That is for all of us, certain things we ought to remember.

When we then reach New Year, then the resolution has to be put into effect. For one month, as I say, each morning you remember. Allow the time; get up early enough; fifteen minutes; come to yourself. It isn't very much, you know, in the totality of your life. Really we treat God, or we treat that what we call religion rather foolishly and sheepishly. (cheaply?) We really don't pay enough attention to it. And still it should be at least one third of one's life dedicated to the possibility of growth. Maybe it should even be more. But we pay so much attention to our ordinary living, and as if that actually can give us something that we can continue with and that it will last forever. It will not last. It will die like everything else.

What is there in us that could perhaps remain, or that could be permanent? Maybe it is a belief; maybe it is to some extent a certainty. Maybe it can be of help to believe that it could continue. I do not know. It is not a question of hoping that you will go to heaven. Earth is what we are dealing with. It belongs to us now. We are earth beings. We are not space men. We don't belong on the moon. We don't belong anywhere but on earth. But if we wish to grow and could develop something of a higher and a different kind of quality, we would almost automatically go into space. Why is it that we bother so much about the present condition of politics? Why is it that we are so much subject to hysteria, with people who try to tell us this and that and the other, and make us afraid so that we have fall-out shelters and things of that kind? What is it that we can develop, that it is possible to develop within oneself which is independent of anything that we can read in the newspaper or anything that is publicized in the rest of the world? Why should one be affected by what Mr. Kruschkev or even Kennedy says? We can be now free from that if we wish to work for that, but the accent can never be in being led by a variety of different conditions which put fear and trembling in us as if we have nothing else. First we have to know that there is something else that we could rely on that need not change, and we are not finding it by getting away from earth into space and hoping to find it somewhere on the moon. It's quite idiotic. Within ourselves, if man did not have that kind of a possibility of growth, and if he did not have the possibility for himself of becoming that what he is not now but what he could become, so that man potentially has in him the possibility of forming or making within himself a foundation on which he can rely and where he could live. Then there would be very much sense even for man on earth to continue to exist. We would simply fulfill our function as we are in life, and simply after that it would finish.

But during this life and during the possibility of becoming free, and that, and that affected by a variety of different so-called well-

meaning people who tell us that they have to look out for this and for that, how can we when we read, when we are under the influence of a little tea-party where there is gossip, where people tell us to be careful about this and that? It's exactly as if germs already exist which never have existed before, whereas a healthy body is filled with germs all the time which do not affect him because he is healthy. In the same sense if we can be healthy essentially, no question about whatever the war or possibility of war might bring to us can be of any particular effect. We have to learn to become within this world something that becomes dependable for ourselves so that we then be free, to live as we wish, and with that to return to the world and do our task. So instead of being completely absorbed by a great deal of nonsense that is being published, - and sometimes quite interesting, of course -, but that is not enough to give us daily bread, to try to build within oneself, you might say, a shelter which really means something; not for the fall-out but for that what I would call the influence of different kind of forces also from space, but this time to be digested by ourselves for the purpose to make within oneself something that is regarding the ~~the~~ laws of earth more permanent and that then becomes our heaven within.

How can we? We are small; we are practically nothing. We are little specks of dust. And at the same time we have a hope and we have an ambition, and we have a spark of life. And we believe that when we can conceive of the possibility for us that there is also the potentiality and the actualization of that in which direction we should go in order to create and evolve. The aim for us for next year is to try to understand what is meant by a possible evolution of man, and becoming then in that sense more and more free, less and less dependent on whatever anyone, enemy, friend, gossip, acquaintances tell us; to become free from that and to stand on our own feet. And to know for oneself, based on experience, that what is our own world and in which we as simple human beings could evolve something that does not belong to earth but nevertheless could become something that is usable if the accent is placed on that. You can call it spiritual life if you like. You can call it Keshdjan. You can call it by any what name you wish. But it has the characteristic of not being affected by ordinary life in the same way as we are, as a ship without a rudder.

We are looking for something that will help to steer us and on which we can rely, and which will actually guide us through the variety of different chaotic conditions and maze in which we now live. That we must hope for. If there were no hope for the possibility of that, then we shouldn't continue to live at all. One should simply give up all the (time for that?) and the sooner one dies the better it is. But it is not that. We don't have to be that pessimistic. But we have to be pessimistic about the possibility that we actually can accomplish something worthwhile within the lifespan that is allotted to us. How far ever can we come next year on this road towards more consciousness? I do not know. I don't think anyone here does. It depends on whatever the experiences are. It depends on how strong we are, how much we wish. It depends on the realization of what we are, how we see that what binds us and what are obstacles in the way; how earthbound we are, how sleepy we are, how mechanical we are, how much in many ways we are creatures of habit. All of that - I do not know - each case is always different from any other case. And we can never compare. But for ourselves in starting to work towards possible development which can take place without giving up the obligations in ordinary life, maybe it is possible then to come to the point of a little bit more freedom. And even if we

don't reach the final accomplishment of the development of another spiritual body within us, at least we are on the road, and the fact of knowing that we are trying to go in that direction, that already can give a certain satisfaction which we don't know if we don't do it.

So the emphasis is on doing. The emphasis is that what I now know to try to apply, that what is my philosophy, that what I believe in as a religion, that what is my feeling, that what is my attitude towards the things that really concern me, that I believe are for me higher, or that are at least more desirable from my standpoint; that what I feel when I pray. That again has to be converted into the actuality of an application in myself in my life in that what I do or feel or think. And unless I make this effort to apply, that is to put to practice; not to keep it in my head, not to keep it in the feeling, but actually live in accordance with that, that is my behavior which then must express in a very simple way, but nevertheless being instigated by that what I know about how to try to become objective, that I then in my actual behavior towards other people and towards myself become, as I said before, honest to do that with the wish to become that what I would like to become, and time and time again to remember that that is the task.

That I cannot live in my thoughts alone. I cannot live in feelings alone, but that the only way by which I can really live, as I get up, as I dress, as I eat, as I say "hello" to the elevator man, as I buy something in the store, as I go to an office, as I deal with people, as I talk over the phone, as I try to arrange this and that and the other, and that I constantly in my daily life experience that what I do; and digest that what I do within myself. And then I become because of such experience a different kind of person because what I now try to apply is of a different kind of nature; then by that become changed.

And it will be then, I hope, more satisfactory for myself maybe; in all humility, maybe for others. That I can be of more help because I can be more myself, and that I fulfill my function as a human being in my relations towards others and towards what I would call my God. This should be a religion. This should be life. It should be that kind of attitude; it should be really a life-giving force. It should be within me something about which I could be proud, or rather that I am willing to take that as responsibility of carrying forward that what I now have as ordinary life, and to put to the test, and also to protect and to help improve or evolve that kind of talent that has been given with which I find myself, and with which, thank God, I have certain form of help with which I can now work. That is my task.

And when I think of next year, I want to take that as a possibility in which I will not shirk that kind of a responsibility regarding myself or that for which I now try to live and which will then color my actions, my thoughts and my feelings towards other people.

It doesn't matter what questions you have, you know. It all comes to the same thing. I am asleep. What do I do to wake up? I know I am asleep because I know how I am when I am awake, and I see what I have been, and when I see it, when I formulate it, again I am asleep. And if I sleep, I dream about the possibility of how I should be; and that when I dream, then for one moment I wake up. And again I find myself asleep. And it is this constant interchange between that what could take place, what does take place, what has taken place, what I wish,

what I hope for, what must be, what ought to be, and towards which then I dedicate part of my life. To wish to know, to wish to understand, to wish to be able to do the right, honest, objective thing for myself above all.

It's the whole year, a year full of opportunities, a year of so many days in which each day is an opportunity. Then if we could at the present time not only extend it as far as January is concerned for one month, but if I could now determine for myself with such a fervent wish that I really want to try to make out of each day something where I tell myself early in the morning, "Today is a day for me. Today is an opportunity for me. Thank God I am alive. I now wish to become what I really should become so that for that kind of satisfaction for myself, my inner joy, something can happen if I simply try to apply the little I know in my relationships towards other people." Perhaps then each day could have a different kind of a color. And then as such a group like we have now can help remind each other of that kind of an aim, that ideal, that - really - that wish for our lives, for our own conscience, to become what we should be. Maybe. Maybe it is possible. I don't know. Our resolutions usually last just for a little while. Then they go. It's in the nature of earth. It is in the nature of ourselves. We are such weaklings. We are constantly living under the influence of the law of gravity. It pulls us down psychologically, and tomorrow I forget what has been the aspiration today. And at the same time it is not really necessary to forget everything. And if I just each day can have a little spark of what I remember, then it is that kind of intention that must be there. And setting aside the variety of different things that always engage me, and which I know are of not much value, as if I then could come to myself and say, "But that what I really wish, I must now do," then I probably will work a little more. And I might be more open, and more accomplishment, more realization more knowing I am doing the right thing.

Each person has to decide, as we live next year, as we meet in a group, each person has a responsibility towards each other, so that when you see each other, when you meet in a group, when you see each other during the week perhaps, or telephone, that maybe something is in your voice that at that time may remind someone of that kind of an aim: "I wish to live; I wish to be." Only then I can. That what is now I, that what is whiter than snow, purer than ether, that Self I am, I am that Self." So I hope. No one can do it alone, you know. We need each other. We have to help each other. We have to help each other in a resolution to wish, to make it real. And to do something with it. And to rely on each other; and to be open, to be open when someone perhaps tells us we are not doing the right thing, or when someone steps on our toe inadvertently. Take whatever you can as an opportunity to remind yourself, to remember yourself, your Self, your own, that what you are, that what you are essentially, that what always has been and always will be unchangeable in every one of us, and which can be recognized if we have towards that the attitude of veneration, of sacredness, of real love, that what belongs to us as birthright as human beings, that for which we could become responsible if we want to, if we really wish to develop. I hope we will. I hope we can work together; I hope that we will remember it; I hope that we will be serious, that we will remember each day as we now approach the end of the year, and that we have that kind of a resolution of our responsibility for our selves, for our lives, for each other, for something that is like a little nucleus which by itself can exert a certain influence, at least on ourselves in the first place, and from there on those with whom we have dealings so that they cannot tell us that

we are stupid or that we are hypocrites, or that we profess, that we claim we are interested in the ideas of Gurdjieff, and that we don't live it. Don't ever be a hypocrite. Don't ever make it appear as if you are worth more than what you are. But that what you are, that what you can be, that what you understand, almost be proud to be that, and to stand up for that, and never mind whoever says or thinks that, or whatever the criticism is on you, you; either you know or you don't. What you know you can understand by putting to practice that what you know, and the understanding will follow from your experience of living. And then no one in this whole world, not even God Himself, can take it away from you, because in that sense you have become like God.

I wish you a good year in every way. I hope we can work together. I hope we can remind each other. I hope that we will not forget and I hope that we will pray for that, simply, humbly, that to be, to be honest, to have being, to have that within oneself, that what I call the foundation, that what I call the rock on which we can stand.

Good night. I hope to see you all next year, when we - when will it be? - two weeks from today. Good night.